

**STAFF SUMMARY
CITY OF MINNETONKA
CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2007
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Council Present: Dick Allendorf, Bob Ellingson, Terry Schneider, Al Thomas, Tony Wagner, Brad Wiersum and Mayor Jan Callison

Council Absent: None

Staff: John Gunyou, GERALYN Barone, Ron Rankin, Julie Wischnack, Desyl Peterson, David Maeda

Callison called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

1. Report from the city manager

Gunyou said that around 1,100 residents attended Kids' Fest the previous day. That number was down from last year's attendance of around 1,700, but Gunyou said that the city's recreation staff indicated this year's attendance was more manageable than last year's record turnout.

2. Boards and commissions interview

The council interviewed David Carroll, an applicant for the senior citizens advisory board. Carroll said he had been contacted to apply for the board in previous years but has never had the time available to serve. He said he volunteers at the senior center six or seven times a month and also is a tour guide at the Burwell House. Carroll retired three years ago after working for a glass company in the city.

Wiersum asked what Carroll liked most about the senior center and what he liked least. Carroll responded that he thought the center had a good variety of classes and events. He said one area that needs improvement is gathering feedback from residents. He said currently the surveys and questionnaires are not a popular method to collect feedback and one of his ideas is to do phone calls to survey the community.

Callison said that appointments to the various boards and commissions will likely occur at the next council meeting.

3. I-494 Corridor Commission

Allendorf distributed a handout listing the commission's 2007 legislative priorities. He said that the highway projects scheduled to begin after 2015 have no current funding source and that a reliable funding source needs to be identified. The commission is backing a legislative proposal similar to one sponsored last session by Rep. Ron Erhardt that passed the House and Senate and was vetoed by Gov. Pawlenty. The proposal includes a number of different funding sources including a dedication of sales taxes collected on leased vehicles to highways

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and transit; an increase in the gas tax; an increase in the license tab fees; transportation bonding; and exploring broadening the statewide sales tax and allowing the use of region-wide sales tax options.

Allendorf said that the legislature currently may favor a five cent increase in the gas tax as opposed to the 10 cent increase proposed last session.

Wagner said that the League of Minnesota Cities has also made transportation funding a priority. He said the League has developed a sample resolution for cities to pass expressing support for an increase in transportation funding. Wagner said he realized that the council usually doesn't approve these types of resolutions but given the many projects in the city in need of funding, he requested that the council have a discussion on this proposed resolution.

Callison asked staff to circulate the sample resolution for council input.

4. Temporary structure ordinance

Community Development Director Ron Rankin presented the staff's recommended ordinance and indicated he was looking for the council's input before the ordinance is formally introduced.

Schneider said that the proposed ordinance in general was going in the right direction but that the restrictions on color caught his attention. He also said he found it difficult to believe that the cloth structures in the presentation could handle the requirements of being able to withstand 90-mile-an-hour winds, and a snowload of 40 pounds per square foot.

Gunyou said that the ordinance was drafted with the intention to include commercially available off-the-shelf structures.

Ellingson said he supported the purpose of the ordinance but questioned what in reality residents would do with a boat if the temporary structure had to come down six months a year.

Wiersum said he thought the solution was there - that residents could decide to get rid of their boat or to cover it. He said the approach of the proposed ordinance was reasonable in treating temporary structures similar to permanent structures.

Wagner said he thought the temporary storage area should count toward the city's maximum allowable amount of outdoor storage of 1,000 square feet. He also said that he would recommend a different standard than the proposed 50 foot setback from the front property line because some homes are further back from the front property line.

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Allendorf said like Schneider, the restrictions on color caught his eye. He said he was not aware of any other city regulation that restricted use of certain colors.

Thomas said he agreed with Wagner's concern about the 50 foot setback from the front property line. He said that the ordinance should ensure that the structures are located behind the rear line of the house. He thought that they should meet the same standards as sheds.

Wiersum agreed that the setbacks should be the same as for sheds and that he also had concerns about restricting certain colors. He said that residents would likely view that as too much government regulation.

Callison raised a concern about the use of the term "temporary structure" since some of the vehicle storage structures were not meant to be temporary and therefore the language may be creating a loophole for those types of structures.

Wagner asked if the city's salt storage shed complied with the proposed ordinance.

City Attorney Desyl Peterson said that the proposed ordinance applies only to single family or two family residential properties.

In regards to the concerns about the color restriction in the ordinance, Rankin said that many of the current complaints from residents are about the colors of tarps used to cover boats and other items.

Schneider suggested the ordinance be rewritten so that it requires that the color of the structure blend in with its surroundings.

Wiersum suggested that the required permit include language that encourages the permit holder to be considerate of neighbors when deciding on the color of the structure.

5. Comprehensive plan process

Gunyou said staff was looking for the council's input on the selection and role of the steering committee as well as a discussion on community involvement in the comprehensive plan process.

Consultant Beth Bartz from SRF Consulting Group gave a presentation of the proposed comp plan process. The visioning process includes conducting a community survey in March and using the *Minnetonka Memo* and city web site to provide information to residents. Bartz said there would be a staff workshop in

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April and a community listening session April 10. The plan calls for a joint council and boards and commissions workshop April 18 and for the council to review the process in May.

Allendorf asked the approach being taken to encourage the maximum resident participation in the sessions. Bartz indicated that originally the thought was to coordinate the listening sessions with other community festivals, but the timing of the process was such that approach wouldn't work. She said she agreed with Allendorf that it is a challenge to get people involved and that scheduling early morning and late afternoon sessions hopefully would increase participation.

Barone said that along with the community survey, invitations would be sent to stakeholders representing various community groups. Bartz said that taking different approaches was meant to increase turnout. She said surveys would work for some people but that others prefer personal interaction. Gunyou agreed and said that providing multiple opportunities for residents to provide feedback would allow as many people as possible to participate.

Schneider suggested renaming the listening sessions as "feedback sessions." He said that past experience has taught him that if something isn't done the way a resident suggests, it opens the city up to the criticism it didn't listen. He said that inviting a known keynote speaker and including some type of electronic voting to provide instant feedback might increase participation.

Callison agreed getting people involved was a crucial piece of the process, setting the foundation for the plan.

Wiersum said that community education also needed to be considered in the process, because many residents were not clear on what the purpose of the comprehensive plan is and what it is not designed to be. Education is important, he said, so that residents understand that the plan is a guide and not a manifesto. He said that the guide plan discussion should also be tied in with a discussion on what the city's ordinances say and what they do not say.

Ellingson suggested the sessions be televised.

Gunyou said the listening sessions were meant to be a kickoff to the process. He said that the sessions would open the discussion about reaffirming the city's current values and determining if those values should be the same 20 years from now.

Callison said for the plan to succeed, the community has to buy into it by feeling they had contributed in the development.

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Wiersum suggested that instead of just a single article in the *Minnetonka Memo*, that a series of front page articles for several months would signal the importance of the comp plan process.

Wischnack indicated that staff could put together a fact sheet about what the comprehensive plan is supposed to be. She said this might answer some of Wiersum's concern about educating residents and clearing up misconceptions.

Gunyou said it was important to keep in mind that the comp plan is more than a land use plan. He said that the plan also needs to look at what services the city should be providing 20 years from now and the overall direction the city will be taking. Twenty years ago the cities of Edina and St. Louis Park had similar demographics, but the cities took different directions. Edina's population now includes more elderly residents while St. Louis Park's has become more diverse. Minnetonka's population is now aging like these neighbors, so the comp plan should include a discussion about what direction we might take as a community. For example, the city's recreation programs could be focused on more programs for the growing senior population. Alternatively, the city might decide to focus on attracting younger families with a mix of programs to maintain greater diversity in the population.

Schneider said it was important that the demographic studies include somebody that has the ability to interpret the data and identify potential trends and demographic shifts.

Bartz replied that one of the people that may be asked to take a part in the process is Tom Gillaspy, the state demographer.

Thomas said that one area that was missing from the proposed special studies was a transportation plan. He said the Metropolitan Council's focus on affordable housing has lacked the corresponding link for the need for more public transportation.

Callison agreed the comp plan is more than a land use document. It should address quality of life issues like natural resources and include looking at specific policies such as making the city's building code more "green"

Wischnack agreed and indicated that the implementation plan portion of most comprehensive plans is an afterthought, but the city's implementation plan will be much more detailed.

Schneider expressed concern about keeping the comp plan workable. He said that by making it too broad and getting away from the basic land use documents, there may not be enough resources available.

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Gunyou replied the components of the comp plan beyond those typically included in a land use plan would primarily involve internal staff. He then asked the council for input on who should chair the steering committee and the makeup of the committee.

Wiersum suggested Callison chair the committee, saying she was exceedingly well prepared for meetings and that would reflect well on the city. He said that the committee would be strengthened if the mayor was chair because people would feel that the committee had the council's attention.

Schneider said one concern he had with the mayor chairing the committee is that the council might be perceived as playing too big a role and having too much influence on the process. Allendorf said that when he chaired the last steering committee, the role of the chair primarily was to keep the committee on task and run the meeting.

Callison said she agreed that the committee should be made up of a mixture of boards and commissions members as well as residents who are not part of the status quo and could bring different perspectives. She said the membership of the council, boards, and commissions should be limited, and suggested that a single member from each of the park board, planning commission, and economic development authority serve on the committee. She said that if the right young person could be found it would be nice to get the youth perspective as well.

Thomas agreed that Callison would be a good selection to chair the committee. He said that the mayor understands the need to stay on task and that the work needs to get done. He said an effort should be made to find people who normally are not active on the city's boards and commissions. He suggested looking at some of the recent applicants who will not be placed on any of the boards and commissions to get a wide range of perspectives.

The council concurred that Callison should serve as chair of the comp plan steering committee.

6. Adjournment

The study session adjourned at 8:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

David E. Maeda
City Clerk